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Rothbury
Rural District Council.

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE

Year ended 31st December, 1937.

ROTHBURY:
Snaith & Company, Printers, Bridge Street,

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROTHBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to present my report for the year 1937.

The **Rothbury Rural District** comprises 167·886 acres.

The Registrar General's estimate of the resident population (mid 1937) is 5,629, a decrease of 58 compared with the year 1936.

The number of inhabited houses is approximately 1600, and the rateable value on December 31st, £34,578, the estimated product of one penny in the £ being £140.

The district rate for the year was 8/8, including a county rate of 7/8.

The **social conditions** of the district are uniformly good.

The principal industry is agriculture, chiefly rearing and feeding of sheep and cattle. Grass land continues to increase at the expense of arable land.

There was little unemployment throughout the district during the year.

Vital Statistics.

Births. The number of Births registered in the district was as follows:

		Males	Females	Total
Live Births	Legitimate	38	30	68
	Illegitimate	3	1	4

In addition to these 6 births belonging to this district took place in Hospital, and were registered in Newcastle. This gives a total of 78 births for the district.

Rate per 1000, 13·8. (England & Wales 14·9).

There were 4 Still Births, all legitimate.

Rate per 1000, 0·70. (England & Wales 0·60).

For 1936 the number of Live Births was 68, and the rate per 1000, 11·9.

Deaths. There were 56 Deaths registered within the district and 18 outside the district, giving a total of 74 for the year.

Rate per 1000, 13·1. (England & Wales 12·4).

In 1936 the number of deaths was 81, and the rate per 1000, 14·2.

There were no deaths from Puerperal causes nor from Whooping Cough and Measles. Diarrhœa caused 1 death.

The following are the chief causes :

1. **Diseases of the Heart and Blood Vessels** 23 (including 7 of Cerebral Hæmorrhage).
2. **Malignant Disease** (Cancer) 16.
3. **Senility** 6.
4. **Diseases of Respiratory System** 5 (including 4 of Pneumonia).
5. **Influenza** 4.
6. **Diseases of the Urinary System** 3.

There was 1 Infantile Death (age 2 weeks) due to prematurity.

With 74 deaths and 78 births there was an increment of population of 4, compared with a decrement of 13 for the previous year.

Whilst diseases of the Circulatory System still claim the greater number of deaths, Cancer is climbing up the scale The number of deaths from this cause in 1937 is, I believe, the highest on record, though only one more than in 1936. This steady increase is common to the whole Kingdom, and one reason is that people are living longer. Cancer is a disease of later age, and, since the span of life is being extended there are more potential subjects of the disease. Why old age is more favourable to the development of malignant disease is not known. Research work is going on unceasingly and, in all probability, the mystery of Cancer will eventually be solved. At the same time it cannot be too widely known that many superficial cancers are curable, chiefly by Radium and X-ray therapy, the essential factors being early diagnosis and early treatment.

Laboratory Facilities are provided by the County Council Laboratory at Lemington-on-Tyne, and many specimens are sent from this district for examination and report.

Ambulance Facilities. The district is adequately served by the Rothbury & District Motor Ambulance, for the use of which a reasonable charge is made to cover running expenses. A new 25 h.p. Morris Ambulance was delivered to the district on February 12th, and between that date and March 23rd, 1938, it had completed a mileage of 6814, comprising 105 journeys. It is at the service of anyone residing in the Rothbury Rural District and is managed by a Committee representative of the whole area—six members of this committee being also members of your Council.

Nursing in the Home. This is provided by District Nurses and Cottage Nurses, all fully trained. The district of Ewesley & Ritton White House cannot be described as adequately supplied with Nursing facilities.

Hospitals. The only Hospital under your jurisdiction is the Isolation Hospital at Rothbury. It was used only once during the year for the isolation of some children from a small cottage where a serious case of Diphtheria had occurred. The Hospital—outside and in—is in good condition.

At Alnwick there is a Small Pox Hospital for this and other districts, but the joint Infectious Hospital for all the Rural and Urban districts of North Northumberland is yet only on paper.

The Rothbury Convalescent Home continued its work during the year.

Water Supplies. The whole area continues to be well watered. No serious complaints of any shortage in any of our local supplies, perhaps with the exception of Harbottle village where on two or three occasions during the year there has been trouble with burst pipes, in each case branch connections. The Rural Council supplies Longframlington, Thropton, Snitter, Whittingham and Elsdon. The Harbottle supply is rented from the Harbottle Estate and supplies all houses in the village every house now having the water laid in. Tynemouth Corporation supplies the Embleton Terrace Houses—30 in number—it is laid into each house, which has a Bath and Hot and Cold Water system installed. Rothbury town supply is owned by the village and has been very efficient during the year—no shortage of any kind and all new houses have been connected up to village mains.

Sewerage. In Rothbury village all main drains and sewerage works have been kept in order; other small sewerage schemes in area are at Harbottle, Netherton, Longframlington, Thropton and Snitter—treatment of effluent is needed at Thropton and Longframlington—Elsdon and Whittingham and small schemes for each of these districts are being considered.

Scavengering. Rothbury comprising the old Urban area is the only real scavengering scheme in area—it is carried out by contract—is let each year—all refuse is taken to Tip twice weekly and works very satisfactorily. A scheme similar for the whole Rural District is at present being considered. At Thropton a private arrangement with a contractor clears away all house refuse, filth, etc., once every fortnight at a cost of 2½d. per fortnight per each house; a public Tip is provided and this arrangement works very satisfactorily. A similar arrangement is carried out at Embleton Terrace (30 houses).

Sanitary Conveniences. More water closets are being installed throughout our district and in Thropton village now only very few Privy Middens remain, and more baths too are being fitted wherever the water supply permits.

Milk Supply and Dairies. Inspection of drains was quite satisfactory and the supply of milk in the district was adequate and good. Three dealers supply "Accredited" Milk, that is, raw milk from cows which have passed a veterinary examination. I am informed that about 65 per cent of the children attending Rothbury school are now taking "School Milk"—a very considerable improvement on the figures for 1936. Observations and records in a large school area in the County of Durham have proved the advantage, both mental and physical, to those children who take "School Milk," compared with those who do not take it.

Slaughter Houses. These were kept in good condition during the year and no complaint of diseased meat was made.

Schools. No complaint as to the sanitary condition or water supply of any school was made during the year.

Regarding the eradication of bed-bugs no report of the presence of these unpleasant insects within the district was made.

Factory and Workshops Act. No complaint has been made with regard to the few small undertakings in the district. The Ewesley Quarry Co. employ about 35 men at Ritton White House. The cottages here are to be demolished owing to their dilapidated condition as soon as new housing accommodation is provided for the quarrymen.

General Improvements. Nine new Houses in all have been built at the Pondicherry, Rothbury & Thropton. Additions and improvements have been carried out at "Wreigh Close," Thropton, bathroom and water closets fitted, considerable additions to living rooms and large games room added. At Ritton White House and Ritton Farm House bathrooms and water closets have been installed and water supplies laid on to houses. At the Lee Farm bathroom fitted, new wash house, etc., and improvement to dairy. At Harbottle, new house sink and drain, and laid on water supply to cottage owned by Mrs. Dobson; the water supply laid into cottage occupied by Mr. Geo. Common, (Harbottle Estate); the cottage owned by Mr. Robt. Landells has had a laid on water supply with house sink and drain provided. At Thropton, bathroom fitted with hot water system installed (Mr. Turnbull's, Cragside Estate), and at the Pondicherry stone cottage (Miss Cathcart's) bathroom, W.C. and hot and cold water system installed; the Church Cottages 2, Thropton 2—water closets have been fitted in place of old privy middens with proper drainage and the water supply extended to each cottage. At Harwood Farm (Forrestes House) new bathroom fitted. W.C. installed, and proper septic tank provided. At Prendwick in Whittingham area, the water main renewed and relaid and all drains relaid in proper sanitary pipes and septic tank provided.

Infectious Diseases.

Notifications (exclusive of Tuberculosis) 104, as follows :—

Chicken Pox	70
Diphtheria	13
Pneumonia	10
Scarlet Fever	5
Erysipelas	4
Typhoid Fever	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	1

Excluding cases of Chicken Pox there were 34 cases as shown. In 1936, also excluding Chicken Pox, there were 32 cases. The epidemic of Chicken Pox was almost exclusively confined to the Rothbury and Thropton school areas. The mildness of the symtoms and the rather acute nature of the infection make it difficult to check by means of isolation. Fortunately it is very rarely followed by any serious complications.

Of the 13 cases of Diphtheria, 10 occurred at Whitton Tower, Convalescent Home for Children from Newcastle. These children had evidently brought the infection with them, and this being pointed out to the Health Authority of Newcastle, an assurance was given that the throats of all children would be swabbed and examined before sending the children to Whitton.

Tuberculosis Eight cases (all of Lungs) were notified during 1937, with three deaths. This is a serious increase compared with notifications for 1936, which numbered only two, and is the most disturbing feature of the year. In this connection many of the rural-workers' cottages require re-conditioning, especially as regards more light and air-space, and the prevention of dampness. A widespread campaign in this district would undoubtedly reduce the conditions favourable to Tuberculosis

The Sanitary Inspector's report is incorporated in this report, and again I wish to thank Mr. Clarkson for his willing co-operation in all matters relating to my department.

I am, Gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,
A. S. HEDLEY.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Year ending December 31st, 1937. *Sanitary Officers Order 1926 Art. 19 (15).*

Rothbury Rural District. Population - 6579 Inspector. E. J. Clarkson.	HOUSING.						WATER SUPPLY		DRAINAGE			SANITARY CONVENIENCES.													
	Structural defects	Dampness	Not reasonably fit for Human Habitation	Defective Food-store	Overcrowding	Nuisances	Insufficient	Unsatisfactory	Defective	Untrapped or dilapidated	Insufficient	Insufficient	Defective	Foul	Dairies, Cowsheds & Milkshops	Slaughter Houses	Shops, Food-stores, etc.	Tents, Vans, &c.	Workshops and Workplaces	Nuisances from keeping of animals	Insanitary Ashpits and Receptacles	Ashpits improperly used	Offensive accumulations	Smoke nuisances	Petrol Stores
No. of Inspections made 220	29	...	...	...	...	...	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	..	10	8	36	8	2	2	20	...	...	...	12
No. of defects or contraventions of bye-laws found	8	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	...	...	...	...
No. of defects etc. outstanding from previous year	16	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	..	...	...	..	...	...	16	...	..	...	...
Total	24	30	...	36	...	...	3	12	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	...	...	...	12
Number remedied after letter or interview.	8	4		...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
No. of informal notices served	...	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Defects remedied thereafter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
No. of statutory notices served	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Defects remedied thereafter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...
In progress or being dealt with	10	24	...	36	...	...	3	12	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	20	...	...	...	..
Legal Proceedings	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

HOUSING (CONSOLIDATED) REGULATIONS, 1925. (SECTION 31).

Statistics for the year ended December 31st, 1937.

HOUSES erected during the year:—By Local Authority, 0. By other persons—with State assistance, 0; Unaided, 9; Total 9.

ROTHBURY RURAL DISTRICT E. J CLARKSON, Inspector.	Total for whole district							
INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR—								
No. of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects	26							
No of inspections made for the purpose	0							
No. of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	15							
No. of inspections made for the purpose	0							
No. of dwelling houses found to be so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	0							
No. of dwelling houses found not to be in all respects fit for habitation	0							
REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE								
No. of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action	0							
ACTION UNDER STATUORY POWERS—								
Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Acts 1930--								
No. of dwelling houses in respect of which 'notices' were served	0							
Number rendered fit after formal notice—By owner	0							
By Local Authority	0							
No. of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied								
No. in which defects were remedied after formal notice—								
by owner	0							
by Local Authority in default of owner	0							
No. of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	0							
No. of houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	0							
No. of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	0							
No of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit								

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Year ending December 31st, 1937.

SUMMARY OF WORK EFFECTED.

E. J. CLARKSON, Inspector.

SANITARY CONVENIENCES	After Letter or Interview	After Informal Notice	After Statutory Notice	TOTAL
Privies abolished	8	...	...	8
Privies repaired	10	...	...	10
Privy ashpits abolished	3	...	...	3
Privy ashpits roofed or repaired ...	9	...	...	9
Pail-closets abolished	8	..	...	8
Water-closets provided	8	.	...	8
Water closets repaired	...	..	...	...
Sanitary bins provided	...	...	...	...
Sanitary bins renewed	..	...	...	...
DRAINAGE				
New drains constructed	7	...	...	7
Drains repaired or reconstructed ...	6	...	...	6
Additional gullies provided ...	7	...	...	7
Old gullies replaced	7	...	...	7
Scullery sinks provided	4	...	...	4
Scullery waste-pipes repaired ...	2	...	...	2
Scullery waste-pipes trapped ...	4	...	...	4
Yards repaired or reconstructed ...	2	...	...	2

WATER SUPPLY

Sources closed or discontinued	0	No. of houses effected	0
New service provided	0	No. of houses effected	0

RIVER POLLUTION

Instances remedied	0	S.D. Works provided	0

FOOD INSPECTION

Samples taken	0

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDER, 1926. Section 6 (1) and (4).

Number of Cowkeepers (registered) in district	7
Approximate number of cows kept	125